

President's Corner

Our Success Comes From Ten Years Of

Over the last ten years, Roberta and I have received thousands of letters from customers. Compliments from fans, suggestions from users, and occasional complaint letters are still routed to us, and I work hard to make sure each gets read and responded to.

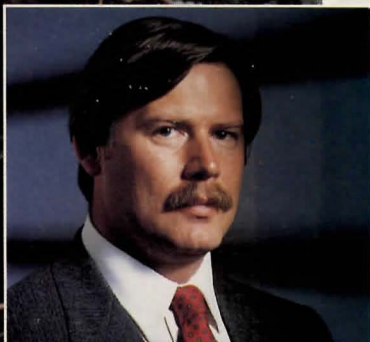
Through the letters we've received, we've found good suggestions on game improvements, spotted developing problems within the company, and been inspired and motivated by your continuing enthusiasm for our games.

In the beginning, Roberta and I collected the best letters and planned on putting them in a scrapbook. I'm sorry to say that most of my favorites have been lost over the years.

Iremember some of the letters though, as if I received them yesterday. And a precious few I have kept on the wall of my office.

This one was dated May 23, 1981:

"...I had a well-publicized airplane crash in February. Fortunately, we are all doing well and I still enjoy flying. I have no memories of the crash or the five weeks following (total amnesia) but have been told of the crash and the hospital stay. Pictures show me in the hospital playing on an Apple with your new game, which I was totally unable to put down..."



Reading Your Mail

Thank you so much for the happiness that you brought into my life. I hope that you find no bounds to your creativity."

*Sincerely,
Steve (Woz) Wozniak*

Those who are familiar with Apple Computers' history recognize the name Steve Wozniak as the creator of the original Apple computer. For me, Steve was a hero of the first degree. The consummate hacker, a successful business man, and even a genuinely nice guy.

This letter came to me at a very important time in my life. When I originally envisioned starting a business to publish software, I wanted to write "serious business applications." Roberta was the games advocate. I sort of thought they were silly. To be honest, I was even a little embarrassed that of all the businesses and companies I had been involved with, my most successful venture came from computer games.

In his letter, Steve let me know that what I was doing had a lot of value. The text of the letter stressed how happy he was that companies like mine were building fun, creative applications. He even said that our game was "the closest application to that for which I really designed the computer." It made me feel a whole lot more comfortable with the path that the company was taking. The support of a man like Woz really gave me pride in what I was doing at a time when I really needed it.





Roberta, remembers a letter that she had framed years ago. It was a handwritten letter, originally about four pages long but only the front page had been framed. We don't remember the name or hometown of the writer anymore. (The letter burned, along with our home, in a fire several years ago.) However, we can both recite one passage from memory. The passage had been drawn over with a yellow highlighter, and Roberta loved it. It came from one of our very earliest customers, way back in 1981.

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It read: "...The kids almost never watch television now. They're always playing Wizard and the Princess or one of your other computer games. They think the television is boring because you just sit there and watch it. They say that it doesn't challenge them and it's just not fun anymore..."

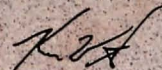
If you've heard Roberta talk on a radio or TV program, or read one of her magazine interviews in the last six years, you know that Roberta now sees the replacement of television as a primary goal for Sierra.

When you come to the Sierra offices today, you can feel the "drive" to do a good job on the software. There's a sense of competition - not just with our industry rivals - but with other forms of entertainment. Roberta, and the other designers that now direct the creativity at Sierra, are driven by a dream of replacing television and audio with something exciting and interactive.

Our musicians want to beat the mainstream recording artists. (A few mainstream recording artists have even come onboard to assist us.) Our animators are working to beat the poor excuse that passes for animation on Saturday morning television these days. (The hardware is holding us back, but we are still gaining on television.) Our programmers know that this isn't a database or a spreadsheet they're working on, but a piece of cinematic art that will likely define an important new industry for decades.

I would like, on this 10th anniversary of Sierra, to take this opportunity to personally thank Steve Wozniak and also the unknown woman with the non-couch potato kids and all of the hundreds and thousands of game players out there for your encouragement and support over the last ten years. Your words have brought direction and drive to this company. The secret of our success is *you*, and Roberta and I want to keep hearing from you. Please keep those cards and letters coming.

Sincerely,



Ken Williams
President
Sierra On-Line, Inc.

